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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 21 March 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 21 March 1996, addressed to you by Mr. Osman Ertuğ, representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 55, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

96-07252 (E) 260396 270396

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ANNEX

Letter dated 21 March 1996 from Mr. Osman Ertuğ
to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 5 March 1996 addressed to you by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations, which was circulated as document A/50/886-S/1996/168 of 6 March 1996.

In the said letter, remarks made by President Rauf Denktaş on the question of missing persons in Cyprus, as part of an interview he gave to the Greek Cypriot television channel Sigma on 1 March 1996, are deliberately distorted and exploited for propaganda purposes. It appears that, with this letter, Greece has dropped all pretence of being detached from the Greek Cypriot campaign of defamation and propaganda against Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and has formally joined the Greek Cypriot administration in this campaign of hatred. It is therefore incumbent upon me to respond to these allegations as a directly interested party.

Referring to the aforesaid interview, the Greek Chargé criticizes President Denktaş for stating an already well-known fact, namely that all missing persons on both sides in Cyprus are dead and that a number of Greek Cypriots were killed during the events of 1974 by the local Turkish Cypriot fighters whose relatives had previously been killed by Greek Cypriots during the 1963-1974 period. He deliberately neglects to mention, however, that this number is very limited and that revenge killings also occurred on the Greek Cypriot side. This is clearly evident from the records of the second meeting of the third round of the intercommunal talks held at Vienna on 1 August 1975, at which Mr. Glafcos Clerides, the then Greek Cypriot negotiator and current leader of the Greek Cypriot community, made reference to "... four persons who had been killed by a Greek Cypriot, who lost relatives in the North" (see the memoirs of Mr. Glafcos Clerides entitled Cyprus: My Deposition, vol. 4, p. 324).

That the "missing persons" on both sides are actually dead has also been confirmed in a recent statement made by the Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Cyprus, Mr. Gustave Feissel, on 5 March 1996, in which he said that no one has ever given the Committee on Missing Persons "any information, evidence, anything at all which would suggest that anybody is still alive somewhere". In the same statement, Mr. Feissel also said that President Denktaş's remarks about the sad fate of the missing should not come as a surprise to anyone. Moreover, Mr. Clerides, when recently asked by the Athens Press Agency to comment on President Denktaş's aforesaid remarks, has himself stated that "even if not on television, Mr. Denktaş has made such remarks on many previous occasions". This confirms that similar remarks have been made before and, contrary to what the Greek Chargé claims in his letter, there is nothing new in President Denktaş's statement which would constitute an "admission".

The allegation in the said letter that Turkey bears responsibility on the issue of missing persons in Cyprus is totally baseless. The fact that Turkey

has fully complied with her international obligations in this regard has been repeatedly confirmed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). On 15 March 1976, the representative of ICRC in Cyprus categorically stated, in the presence of the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Cyprus, that all prisoners of war taken to Turkey had been returned to the island and delivered to the Greek Cypriot side. This fact was subsequently reaffirmed by Mr. Vescey, the then Head of the Missing Persons Department of ICRC, and also recorded in the relevant ICRC report dated 18 March 1976 as follows:

> "In the implementation of the declaration which was signed on 30 July 1974 in Geneva by the Foreign Ministers of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, the Greek Cypriot and Greek (mainland) prisoners held in Turkey were repatriated under supervision of delegates from ICRC, and liberated in the territory under Greek Cypriot control."

It is Greece itself which has a direct responsibility for those killed or missing during and after the coup d'état since it was the Greek Junta, together with its collaborators in Cyprus, that had staged that coup in July 1974, bringing untold suffering and bloodshed to both communities of the island. The assertion that Greece has an interest in this matter by virtue of the fact that a certain number of the missing are its own citizens is ironic. What this actually does is provide further proof of Greece's own deep involvement in, and indisputable responsibility for the bloody coup of 1974 and the events that it triggered off. In any event, Greece could have manifested its "interest" by respecting the work of the Committee on Missing Persons, rather than hampering its efforts by baseless propaganda.

Yet the crimes Greece has committed in Cyprus are neither recent nor confined to the events of 1974. It is not forgotten that it was Greece itself, as part of its irredentist policies, that had tried to reach out and annex Cyprus by using the Greek Cypriot community as an instrument in achieving enosis (union of Cyprus with Greece) since the mid-1950s and again since 1963.

Mr. Andreas Papandreou, the ailing former Prime Minister of Greece, talks about these territorial ambitions of his country in his book entitled Democracy at Gunpoint (p. 132) which also covers that period, not with any sense of remorse, but as a matter of national pride:

> "A clandestine operation then began on a huge scale of nightly shipments of arms and troops, of volunteers who arrived in Cyprus in civilian clothes and then joined their Cypriot units. The process was not completed until the middle of summer. No less than 20,000 officers and men, fully equipped, were shipped to Cyprus."

Evidence also abounds in the Secretary-General's relevant reports to the Security Council (e.g., S/5950 of 10 September 1964; S/8286 of 8 December 1967) regarding Greece's complicity in the effort to annex Cyprus to Greece, and the suffering it brought to the island. Many of the missing Turkish Cypriots, 99 per cent of whom are civilians abducted from the roads, their homes and places of work, date back to that period (see S/5950 of 10 September 1964, para. 142; S/6102 of 21 December 1964, para. 93; S/6228 of 11 March 1965, para. 117; and S/7350 of 10 June 1966, para. 76).

As for the Greek Cypriots and Greeks who are said to be "missing", 62 per cent of whom are military personnel, they are the ones who were killed either in the internecine war during the coup d'état of 15 July 1974, or in the events that were caused by the coup. The late Archbishop Makarios, the then leader of the Greek Cypriot community, had acknowledged this fact in his dramatic speech before the Security Council on 19 July 1974 in the following terms:

> "The coup of the Greek junta is an invasion ... The coup caused much bloodshed and took great toll of human lives. I am afraid that the number of casualties is large and that the material destruction is heavy" (verbatim record of the 1780th meeting of the Security Council, S/PV.1780).

It is estimated that over 2,000 Greek Cypriots were killed during the fighting that took place from 15 to 20 July 1974, before Turkey even arrived in the island, in accordance with the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee which gives her the right to intervene in such circumstances. The Scandinavian press had reported this figure to be as high as 4,000. A living witness to the horrors committed during the coup is the Greek Cypriot cemetery priest named Papatsestos, who had made sensational disclosures to Ta Nea newspaper published in Greece, in his interview on 28 February 1976. During this interview, Papatsestos recounts the events of 17 July 1974, when Greek officers required him to bury truckloads of Greek Cypriots in mass graves, together with one young Greek Cypriot whom they buried alive, and 10 dead Turkish Cypriots. Papatsestos had counted at least 127 bodies brought to him on this particular day, and there must have been many similar incidents throughout the island. He points out that the bloodshed would have continued had it not been for the Turkish intervention of 20 July 1974, by stating "... it is true that the Turkish intervention saved us from a merciless internecine war. They had prepared a list of all Makarios supporters and they would have slaughtered them all."

Reflecting a similar view, the Greek Cypriot daily newspaper, Haravgi, the mouthpiece of the Communist party, AKEL, carried an article in its issue of 15 March 1984 disclosing the fact that "the plotters arrested 2,500 AKEL supporters and put them in prison. Others were murdered during the arrests. Had the plotters stayed in power, they planned to kill 10,000 members and supporters of AKEL."

In the light of this overwhelming evidence, it is obvious that if the Greek Government is looking for people who committed "crimes against humanity" in Cyprus, it need not look very far. A country which has always conspired with its Greek Cypriot accomplices in devising and executing plans aimed at the total extermination of the Turkish Cypriot community (i.e., the "Akritas Plan"), aided and abetted terrorist organizations such as EOKA and EOKA-B and the Greek Cypriot armed elements which massacred, en masse, entire Turkish Cypriot populations of the villages of Murataga, Atlilar and Sandallar, in the North, as well as others in the South, such as Taşkent and Aleminyo, should certainly have nothing to say on this issue. Greece should realize that its share of responsibility in these crimes against humanity runs deeper than what is at present known by the international community and should desist from engaging in inflammatory rhetoric which is bound to backfire, exposing even further its own culpability in this respect.

It is indeed no less than a scandal that those who must share responsibility for the horrifying atrocities exemplified by the following extract taken from the international press should consider themselves eligible to raise this issue, let alone accuse others on the question of missing persons:

> "One of Packard's first tasks was to try to find out what had happened to the Turkish hospital patients. Secret discussions took place with a Greek Cypriot minister in the collapsed government. After a brief investigation he was able to confirm local rumours.
>
> "It appeared that Greek medical staff had slit the patients' throats as they lay in their beds. Their bodies were loaded on to a truck and driven to a farm north of the city where they were fed into mechanical choppers and ground to the earth."

(Extract from The Guardian dated 2 April 1988 which was based on a report by Commander Martin Packard, a British ex-intelligence officer, who had investigated the disappearance of 28 Turkish Cypriots in-patients at the Nicosia general hospital after the Greek Cypriot armed onslaught of December 1963.)

President Denktaş should be praised rather than criticized for having reiterated the truth on this humanitarian issue, in the face of intensified Greek Cypriot propaganda on the matter and the Greek Cypriot leadership's refusal to tell the truth to their people. It is high time that, as leader of the Greek Cypriot community, Mr. Clerides also rose to the occasion and told his people what he has already admitted in his memoirs, namely that revenge killing on both sides occurred during the various stages of the Cyprus conflict and that "those who lost their lives were simply listed as missing persons" (Cyprus: My Deposition, vol. 1, p. 232).

It will be recalled that while originally claiming to have as many as 3,000 missing persons and later coming down to 1,619, the Greek Cypriot side has been unable to submit to the Committee of Missing Persons in Cyprus the files of even that many. Faced with mounting international and public pressure to submit all their files on the missing, the Greek Cypriot authorities, towards the end of last year, had to publicly pronounce that at least 45 of the 1,619 missing were in fact dead and subtracted these cases from their list of missing. The Greek Cypriot weekly magazine Selides (No. 210 of November 1995) encapsulated the sentiment of the Greek Cypriot press and public on that occasion:

> "Keeping 45 persons on the list of the missing for 21 years though it was known by the officials that they are in fact dead might come as a shock. But the main shock is the fact that though they knew about the state of affairs, the officials hid the reality from the relatives of these people and undermined the case of the missing."

When the Greek Cypriot side finally submitted all the files on its "missing" to the Committee on Missing Persons after repeated failures to do so, the figure had come down to 1,493. In an earlier statement (23 October 1995) Mr. Clerides had admitted that some 300 of those who are listed as missing may actually be dead. This inconsistency and outright deception of their public clearly demonstrates the lack of credibility on the part of the Greek Cypriot

leadership and its determination to continue to recklessly exploit this sensitive humanitarian issue for political ends. The fact that Greece has also openly joined in this repugnant campaign of deception only reinforces our well-founded belief that the joint Greek-Greek Cypriot front is only wasting the time and energy of the international community with the pretence that it may actually be interested in resolving this or any other issue connected with the Cyprus question, including the overall question itself.

I would nevertheless like to take this opportunity to express our continued support for the work of the Committee on Missing Persons and to call upon the Greek Cypriot side to adopt a sincere and humane approach to the matter by joining President Denktaş and Your Deputy Special Representative in Cyprus, Mr. Gustave Feissel, in telling the truth, however bitter it may be, to the families of those who have lost their loved ones, so that this issue may be put to rest once and for all.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 55, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus